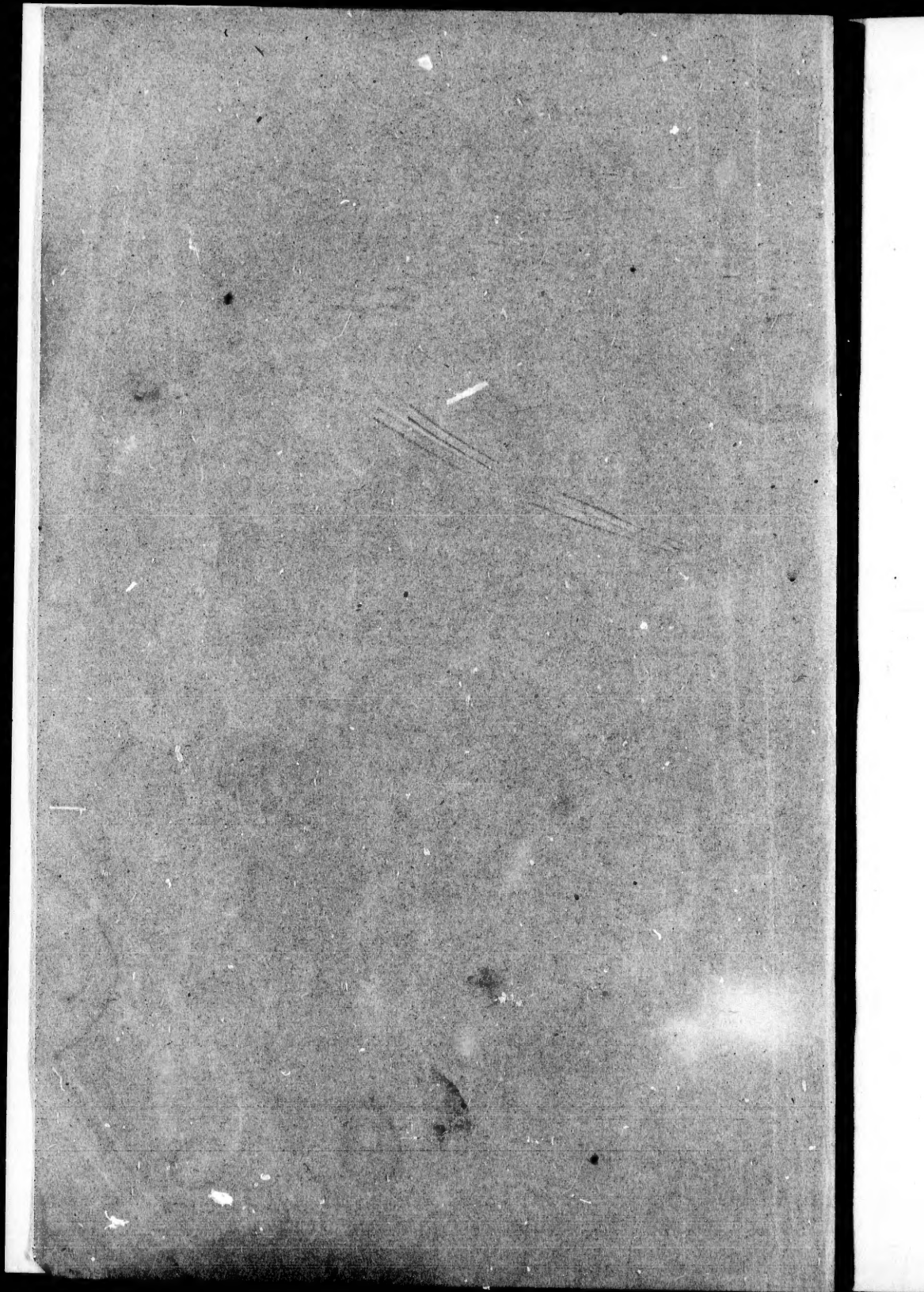


THE NEW HEAVENS,
AND
THE NEW EARTH.

BY THE

REV. PATRICK GRAY, OF KINGSTON,
CANADA WEST.

OGDENSBURGH, N.Y., & PRESCOTT, C.W.:
PRINTED BY ROBERT KENNEDY, "EVANGELIZER" OFFICE.
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PREFATORY NOTE.

THE substance of the following essay was first delivered to the author's congregation, several years ago. A portion of it was, at a subsequent period, reproduced in a lecture read before "The Young Men's Christian Association," of Ottawa. The lecture appeared in one of the Ottawa papers at the time, and afterwards repeated enquiries were made for copies which could not be supplied. Quite recently, requests of a similar nature have been made, and the result is the present publication.

The subject is believed to be one of great practical importance, and fitted to exert a powerful salutary influence upon the thoughts and actions of men. As a matter of such consequence, it was intended to be treated.— And now the attempt is given to the public, in the hope that the representation of "the things above," and of the future blessedness of "the ransomed of the Lord," so much less dwelt upon by Christians now, than by Christ and His apostles, may have, through God's blessing, the effect of making "the Father's house dearer"—more like "sweet home" to His children, and also of awakening thought and desire, and helping towards their right direction in all classes of readers.

Kingston, Oct., 1861.

THE NEW HEAVENS, AND THE NEW EARTH

After life and immortality have been brought to light, after all the advances made by men in the knowledge of divine and human things, the certain, solemn, awful future has still a veil of impenetrable mystery hanging over it.

We know, from the works and word of God, from the instincts and yearnings of our nature, that there is to be a resurrection, judgment, retribution, heaven, and hell! We know that, though we die, we shall live again in conscious personal identity, and in conscious possession of bliss or woe; but what shall be the nature and manifestations of that future life, what its conditions, sphere of action, and place of abode, we can answer in great measure only by conjecture.

Ignorance on our part regarding such matters is, to a great extent, unavoidable. We have neither the means of obtaining, nor the capacity of understanding full information. Unexplained mystery obscuring so large a portion of "the world to come," when, doubtless, God could have given us a more extensive, if not a complete revelation of its wonders, must be seen by the All-wise to be a right and necessary arrangement for us in our present state. Even we can understand how clearer views of the future would invade the province of faith, displace the truest tests of conduct and character, and alter or render vain the system of things suitable to our state of probation, and probably unfit us for every duty of life.

We have no reason, therefore, to complain because there is a veil between us and the future, nor should we wish for more than the glimpses into that within this veil which God has given; trustfulness in God should be the predominating feature of character now, but *we may strive to see and understand clearly, what is revealed to us through these partial openings.* Now I fear that generally we do not understand, nor take sufficient pains to understand, what God has actually made known to us about the future state. Not only is it impossible

for us now to survey and realize in its vastness that "world to come," whose gigantic shadow is yet looming over the infant in the cradle as well as the aged man just about to enter its unexplored domains, but what we might know of it is much unknown. The *actually revealed* is, to a great degree, a *vague and dreamy conception*.

The little child thinks of heaven away up in the blue sky, beyond the sun and the twinkling stars; of happy and blessed beings there, reclining upon couches formed of the fleecy clouds, or wandering in verdant glades perfumed by the fragrance of countless flowers; or skimming o'er the surface of the "sea clear as crystal," or standing harp in hand around the throne, amid angel choristers singing the praises of Him who said of little children, "of such is the kingdom of heaven." The child thinks of the pit of woe, and wretched beings there; of a dark abyss away down beneath somewhere, its gloom only lightened by brimstone flames—its silence only broken by the voice of blasphemy and the screams of agony extorted by the lash of cruel demons. And the conceptions of grown-up men are not less crude, while neither so beautiful nor so terrible.

Now, we are such—so related to and bound up in that mysterious future, that our ideas of it cannot but exert a powerful influence upon us in this present state;—and just in so far as our views of it are accurate or inaccurate reflections of the light of truth, will our conduct and character be right or wrong to the extent that conduct and character are moulded by "the powers of the world to come."

Thus, referring to the prospect of immortality, the Apostle John says, "Now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is." If besides, and connected with this sublime yet avowedly indefinite statement, certain so-called spiritual, mystical, perhaps absurd notions of the state of glory are entertained, the effect of these fantasies, so far as views of the future do affect a man, is to make the Christian a childish visionary. If, on the other hand, with the full belief of the unutterable and inconceivable felicity and grandeur of the heavenly state, which scripture poetry and metaphor have labored, and labored in vain, to represent, the Christian holds sober, rational, and as accurate views of heaven as are revealed, the effect of such faith and opinion is to make him a faithful, and at the same time an intelligent expectant of eternal life.

Bearing these preliminary observations in mind, let us try, by a careful induction of facts revealed to us in the Word and works of God,

and by a cautious and reverential reasoning upon such data, to impress upon and infuse into our conceptions of the world to come, the form and life of truth, as much as it is possible for us to do in such a case.

All descriptions of the heavenly state found in the Bible are figurative, literal, or mixed—that is, the figurative and the literal blended or meeting in the same statement. This distinction is obvious, and examples of these different classes of statements will readily occur to your memory. To save time I shall not quote, as I might, passages belonging to each kind, but at once call attention to a plain, literal statement regarding the abode and character of man redeemed and restored to righteousness, on which I propose to found the observations which follow.

In the second epistle of Peter, the Apostle, speaking of the certainty of a future state of retribution, to warn infidel and ungodly scoffers, and to cheer and urge to energetic dutifulness those who waited for the coming of the Lord, says, "The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God? Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for *new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.*"—2 Pet. iii. 10-13.

This statement does not occur in a poetical writing, but in a calm, instructive, friendly letter. We are not presented with metaphors in the glowing and gorgeous language of the enraptured seer, which we must receive just as so many symbolic signs, or sensuous pictures of the reality. We have a plain, simple description of what is to be, so far as language can depict, and as it is proper for us to know. There is to be "new heavens and a new earth;"—a real heavens and earth for restored man. It is the future, not the millennial, state of which the apostle speaks. The people whom he addressed looked for it—had it assured to them, but they saw no millennium. Thousands in the succeeding ages, who believed this report and fell asleep on its promise, saw no millennium. We, to whom this promise is also given, in these latter days see no millennium. It is coming, but not yet come, and there is little hope of it for many a day. And this statement about the future is an intelligible revelation to us, as now situated, other-

wise, it is no revelation at all. From all which it seems to follow inevitably that the future state of "the redeemed from among men," will bear a resemblance—be similar to the present state of things in its great and essential physical aspects—and that the difference will be chiefly in a moral and spiritual respect, for in the new earth "dwelleth righteousness." In that, with such changes and modifications as are necessary to adapt the abode for a regenerated and holy and happy race of beings, lies probably all the difference between the earth that now is, and "the inheritance of the saints."

How many airy and fantastic and groundless notions are dissipated on this supposition? Heaven, as we have thought of it, has been a dream, a myth, a receptacle and commixture of all fanciful and even impossible things, to perplex, and confound, and fill with dismay every one who strove to gaze upon the holy place, and desired to enter into the joy of the Lord. And yet these notions were dignified with the name of devotional feelings and holy beliefs. And the simple-minded and the most earnest souls have feared and mourned because they could not work up within their minds an appreciation of, and desires for these fancy sketches; because they found nothing within to meet with, and correspond to what they fondly thought was heaven, but what was in fact the disorderly, monstrous product of human ignorance and weak pietism.

In proof and illustration of what has been advanced, let me call your attention first of all to the nature of the being for whom the new heavens and earth are designed.

1. Man is a creature of complex structure and manifold endowment. He is formed with a material body, by which he is allied to earth, and to the lower orders of creatures there. He possesses an immortal soul, by which he is allied to other intelligent creatures, and to God above, the Creator of all. As having a God, his Father and Governor, and a soul which, as it came from God, can find its rest and happiness only in God, he needs a heaven, a dwelling-place of the Most High, whither to turn his eyes and heart in devotion; he needs a temple and a religion to be the channel of communion with that God. So he requires now, and shall require ever—"Heavens." As endowed with intelligence, reason, sentiment, and strong affections, he needs both "heavens" and "earth" to occupy his faculties in the pursuit of science, truth and good below, and in the pursuit of the highest and holiest above. As the possessor of bodily organs and powers, he needs a field for their exercise, a work to engage him, a place and time to do it, and materials

to work upon, so he requires also an earth, and ever shall, while his nature is human. Thus that future state, to be a state for humanity, must of necessity be composed, as now, of heaven and earth. A brighter heaven, indeed, for regenerated and glorified humanity, shall stand in a new relation to heaven—as it were nearer, “before the throne;” a more beautiful, an altogether lovely earth, for it shall be formed to be the fit and pure abode of immortal and sinless men.

It might be objected to this reasoning, proceeding as it does mainly upon analogy, that it is inconclusive, because man, in the world to come, may not be at all like man as he is now. To this point I call particular attention, as it affects most materially the whole process of investigation, and the conclusion to which we may be led. In the glorified state man cannot be as he is now, nor is it possible for us to conceive fully what shall be the nature and extent of the changes to be undergone, or the nature of that blessed state for which he is adapted by these changes. “We know not what we shall be.” Man was created in God’s image, a perfectly holy, happy, intelligent creature. He required and he had “*heavens and earth*” then. From that state of bliss man by transgression fell, and became an unholy, degraded, guilty, and wretched creature: an object of just abhorrence to, and deserving the wrath of God. But man is also an object of compassion to the blessed God, and, in His love and pity for the poor victim of sin, He sent His own Son “to seek and to save that which was lost.” Christ is “able to save to the uttermost, all that come unto God by Him.” He saves from the curse, the pollution, and practice of sin. He delivers from degradation and woe all who flee to Him for refuge. He sends the promise of the Father—the life and light-bringing Spirit—to regenerate the nature corrupted by sin, that it may have fellowship with God. And finally, He exalts His redeemed to glory, power, and immortality in heaven. There the twilight is exchanged for cloudless day, death is swallowed up of life, the mortal puts on immortality, and all the redeemed are, as creatures may be, holy as God is holy:—they are perfectly blessed in the full enjoyment of God to all eternity! How unlike the present life, that life with God! And yet the redeemed in glory are men, not another order of creatures, but human beings, and clad with all the attributes of humanity. If this were not so, where would be the consciousness of personal identity in the future state? Where Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in heaven if they had become other creatures, so changed as to be Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob no more? What would be the value of the solemn sanctions of reve-

lation? Where the anticipations of joy or terror on a judgment day, if people were not to know themselves, and those, too, whom they had known on earth? "We all must stand before the judgment-seat of Christ!" What meaning would there be in the declaration if we were not to know ourselves and one another to have been what we now are? And how, if we were changed into another kind of beings, could we know that? And how, if so changed, could we with intelligent consciousness, sing in glory, "Thou hast redeemed us?" Besides, Enos and Elias have gone into that unseen world, body and soul, only their mortality was exchanged for immortality; their humanity in its completeness is there. And Christ is risen, and His humanity is enthroned in glory. The very body that grew on earth from infancy to manhood, that was wearied and worn, that was disfigured by rod and scourge, and mangled on the cross, that lay cold and lifeless in Joseph's tomb,—was raised again, and re-united in endless life to the human spirit that had animated it, and to the God who had assumed it to Himself.

So humanity is already in heaven, and humanity shall dwell in heaven when all things are restored. And the change which passes on it, and distinguishes it from humanity here, is not such as to make it another kind or form of life, it is simply a change to perfectness. Sin and guilt upon the soul, tendencies to decay and elements of dissolution in the body, corruptions of every kind, are left behind. Incorruptibility in every sense is the nature of redeemed and glorified man—man still, as now, with nothing wanting but what sin and earthly circumstance had invested him with.

But some may object to this conclusion in the very words of Christ: "They that are counted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead . . . are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God;" Luke xx. 35, 36—meaning, if they mean anything different from what I have said, that glorified men shall be like angels, undergo a physical change, and become another and higher order of beings. To this objection it is sufficient to reply, that Christ's words countenance no such interpretation. Men shall be like angels in moral character, in immortality, in the possession of the Holy Father's love, and in all conformation to their exalted state; but they shall be men still, like Christ. AS MAN He rose and sits on high. Must He change His form as Son of Man? Must the Lamb leave the throne? He must, if we are not to be human beings, and if we are to be *like Him* in heaven.

Some have held yet more extravagant opinions about the nature and rank of redeemed men hereafter. Putting an erroneous construction upon such passages of Scripture as these, "Know ye not that we shall judge angels?" "Christ took not on him the nature of angels," &c., they have inferred that men in glory would be exalted above angels.

Now, if Christ would only save you, if God would only count you worthy of the life to come, would you not be satisfied and happy if just regarded in heaven as sinners saved by grace? Would it not be honor enough to be able to claim kindred with Jesus, to know God as your Father, to be loved by Him, *as pure and holy human beings*? Would it add to your felicity to be exalted above holy creatures who never did but obey their God? Would it be right in God to elevate to a higher state of dignity rebels, caught in arms against Him and only saved by grace, than He assigns to those who ever did His pleasure?

It is true, honor and blessings shall be conferred on saved men of a kind not bestowed on angels. Salvation is granted to men and not to angels, but it is to the high honour of holy angels that they did not need salvation! They loved God. They served Him still, when all our race had dared to hate and defy their Maker! God honors ransomed men, bestows on them peculiar honors; but may not honors a thousandfold be also the portion of angels? Our Queen usually dwells in her palace on the Isle of Wight. On that island there is many a sweet cottage home, though lowly in comparison with the residence of royalty, yet happy, sheltering homes. Suppose the queen were to leave her palace, and take up her abode in a cottage for a while: for the time, an honor would be conferred on the lowly cot that was awaiting to the splendid mansion; but the cottage would be a cottage still, and the palace a palace still. So "God in Christ" appeared in human and not angelic form, and God in grace exalts humanity to glory; but humanity is still humanity, and angel life and excellency are still angel life and excellency.

Still more, what is the value of the information given us by those who talk and write and print about man being like the angels, or exalted above angels? Can they tell us what angels are like? In very common parlance and opinion angels are pure, immaterial spirits, possessing neither bodily organs nor form. Now, who taught men this? Books! Systems of theology! Who taught the authors of these books and systems? They never considered that they might be asked the question. They may quote the Scripture, "He maketh His angels spirits, His ministers a flaming fire;" but if you turn to Psal. civ.,

whence the proof is taken, you will find that the whole psalm refers to God's control of all the elements, and creatures in the material world; and that the passage quoted means, He makes the winds His messengers, and the lightnings His servants—all agencies employed by Him in the maintenance and government of His creatures. It is an amazing fact, that all human heads seem to have been filled with the idea of angels being what are called pure spirits, while not a passage of Scripture affirms it, and while in strict propriety we cannot conceive of pure spirit at all; our nearest approach to that being an approach to the conception of *The One Uncreated, Infinite, Glorious God, who fills immensity with His presence*. By the very nature of finiteness—the bound circumscribing all creature life—we are prevented from affirming pure spirituality of any creature. The Scriptures too, and even all our ideas of angels, invest them with attributes that can be predicated only of beings in some material form. We read of one who flew swiftly, and took up so much time in his flight, and it is only to matter that change and motion and time can be applied. If it be still objected that the angels are God's ministers to the heirs of salvation, and that they are invisible, though doubtless ever near to men; I reply, that invisibility is as much an attribute of matter in many a form, as it can be of spirit. God makes the air we breathe His messenger for good to us. We feel the exhilarating influence of the cool breeze when it fans our fevered brow. We witness the destructive effects of the wind in a storm sometimes. But who ever saw the air? Yet it is matter, possessing form and parts. God makes the electric fluid a beneficial agent, pervading, so far as we know, all material things, and essential to their utility, and existence it may be. We hear the rolling thunder, but have we heard its noiseless cause? We see the flashing lightning;—that is only the combustion of a portion of the air ignited by the passage of the subtle fluid, which we have not seen. We may have stood among the eager crowd at the telegraph station, waiting with anxiety for expected and important intelligence, and when the message came, to gladden hearts with the tidings of triumph, or to sadden with the dismal recital of suffering and shame and death; who of all that multitude, dispersing in joy or sorrow, saw the swift messenger who leaped o'er space at a bound, and brought the thrilling report? And yet electricity is matter, and doubtless has its proper form and parts. And so angels may have substantial form, so pure, so ethereal as to be invisible to mortal eye. And so too may the matter of which the immortal body of perfected man is composed be refined, and every way adapted for the undying life.

The conclusion to which we are brought then, at this stage, is that man redeemed and restored shall continue ever man; that a perfect humanity, an undying body and holy soul, shall occupy the future state of blessedness, and partake of its unfading joys. This being admitted, and I do not see how it can be denied, it follows that, not only for the enjoyment, but for the actual existence of men, there must be all the requisites and accompaniments of perfect human life: there must be for it both material and spiritual aliment and objects: there must be literally "new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness;" an earth or world like this to dwell in, and a heaven above with our God there to look up to and adore.

2. By the very use of the phrase "new earth" in connection with, and yet distinguished from, "new heavens," we would naturally understand that a material place of abode was meant; whether this globe, which is our dwelling now, renovated and made a paradise, or some other sphere already formed, or to be created as a fit receptacle for ransomed and exalted man.

The perfect life and life-enjoyment of any being consists in the exercise of all its functions in the proper season and manner. Now the incorruptible body which springs up in "the resurrection unto life:" that which the Apostle Paul calls "a spiritual body," to distinguish it from the "natural" or mortal body of this present state, is something different from the spirit which animates it. It differs from its animating spirit in that it is matter, *body* and *not soul*; and it has at least its germ and type in the dying body here. It is "*this corruptible*" that is to put on "*incorruption*," and "*this mortal*" "*immortality*." Christ did not say to Martha and Mary, "Thy brother's spirit shall live again," but "Thy brother shall rise again." To use the apostle's own illustration, As the wheat reaped this season had its germ in the seed sown last autumn or spring, though that was cast into the earth and died there, so the undying germ of human life within us now, to be consigned to the grave with the corruptible body, shall never lose its vitality, and from it shall arise on the resurrection morning the immortal form—the perfect development of what was so imperfect here. And that perfect form being material, possessing the organs and functions of body, these must be exercised in order to the happiness and usefulness and life of the being who owns that body.

In connection with the passages just referred to in 1 Cor. xv., the

Apostle incidentally casts the light of revelation upon the point I wish to establish. He says, "All flesh is not the same flesh; but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds. There are also celestial bodies and bodies terrestrial; but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body." The unconstrained meaning of all which I believe to be this:—All bodies, as such, everywhere are material, possessed of all the properties and subject to all the conditions of matter. But these bodies, formed of the same constituent particles, may have the matter of which they are composed so variously arranged, and its particles so combined as to produce great varieties in their appearance, adapting them for various and widely different circumstances and uses. Bodies celestial are arranged and fitted for celestial occupants and purposes: bodies terrestrial for earthly inhabitants and ends. Both are material, both suitable, and even beautiful in their adaptation for their respective objects. But the glory of the celestial excels. As the diamond, which, though a stone so precious, in reality so beautiful and rare, is yet composed essentially of the same matter as the common charcoal consumed by the bushel every day in our workshops, the difference of arrangement and combination of the material particles actually forming in one case the costly jewel, in the other the useful but comparatively valueless coal;—so in the heavens and on the earth we behold this variety in the aspects of material things, while one essential substance is the basis of them all. In animated nature, as says the apostle, "There is one kind of flesh," that is, body or form, "of man, another of beasts;" we see all life embodied in matter, with the same properties, but arrayed in many different ranks and orders, each kind constituted for its special sphere of existence. The fish is fitted for existing in water, the bird is formed for flying in the air; the great body of quadrupeds, and man as an animal, are adapted for life and action on the firm ground. All are of the earth, earthy, and all need an earth to dwell in. Even the wild sea-bird that seems ever on the wing, or if it rests, can sit and sleep securely on the bosom of the stormy ocean, can ride 'mid the foam on the crest of the heaving billow, and scream with joy and defiance in the wild conflict of raging elements—

even it, which can exist and enjoy where we, with forms adapted for another kind of life, would perish, needs earth and is as much allied to earth as we. The air in which it flies, the sea on which it floats are component parts of earth. It cannot soar away above the atmosphere which surrounds our globe and live there. It cannot do without the food it finds provided for it in the great deep. It is material and must fulfil the conditions of material life. And, in like manner, must the glorified body of redeemed man, as it is body-matter still, however glorious the change it shall undergo, meet with corresponding material elements whereon, and wherein, and whereby to manifest and enjoy its existence. And that condition of things it shall find in the "new earth."

3. The "new earth" may be this old earth renovated and fitted by God for the residence, or at least for the first stage in the future career, of man renewed after the image of his Maker. I do not affirm this. I only say *may be*. In theology, as in all science, there are probable and certain truths: the first are matter of opinion, the latter matter of faith. That there shall be a new earth for men in the world to come, is a revealed, certain truth, which you must believe on God's authority, or reject at your peril. That the "new earth" shall be this earth renewed, is only a probable truth or conjecture which, after hearing what may be said in support of its probability, you are at liberty to receive or reject, as to you may seem right. I am inclined to think the opinion is right, and will give you my reasons for thinking so, believing that it will be no unprofitable study whatever conclusion we come to.

That which forms the greatest obstacle to the admission of this opinion—which may make the expression of it startling to many, is the apparent contradiction which it receives in the express language of Scripture. Thus it is written, "A *new* earth." "Of old hast Thou laid the foundations of the earth; and the heavens are the work of Thy hands. They shall perish, but Thou shalt endure: yea all of them shall wax old like a garment: as a vesture shalt Thou change them, and they shall be changed;" Ps. cii. "Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath: for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment;" Is. li. 6. "The heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. All these things shall be dissolved;" 2 Pet. iii. 7-11.

I never liked to hazard statements in opposition to the apparent sense of Scripture. In all ordinary cases the mind of the Spirit in

Scripture is found in the obvious meaning that would occur to a plain, honest and sensible man; and, I believe, that the greatest injury to religion, has been done by men putting far-fetched interpretations upon the Word, instead of taking the Bible simply in the form that God has given it. But in references to the events and things of a period long since passed away; and particularly in passages descriptive of the phenomena of the future life, where figures must be employed if there is to be description at all, and where frequently the boldest metaphors are employed by the sacred writers; it is most evident that the obvious, literal meaning of the words, would very seldom be the true meaning. Even in the sober historic language of the New Testament, when we read of ships on the lake of Tiberias, and women grinding at the mill; if we were to take the words and attach to them the obvious meaning, corresponding to matters as they are at the present day, we would form a most erroneous notion of the ships and flouring mills of Galilee. It seems to be the plain meaning of one passage, that the earth is an extended plain supported by pillars, which tremble at the rebuke of Jehovah. That is poetic language, and was never designed to teach any other science than that the Majestic God is glorious in might; but the infallible Church believed it literally, and persecuted, till he recanted his heresy, the unfortunate philosopher who asserted, on scientific grounds, that the earth was a globe, careering through space with inconceivable velocity in its appointed orbit round the sun. It seemed the obvious meaning of another passage that the stars would fall into the earth, and the whole universe rush to ruin on the great day of the Lord. I read an old sermon once, in which this doctrine was propounded in the most serious style imaginable. Yet, if the same statements were made now, probably few men could repress a smile at the preacher's simplicity, if they could suppress their contempt at the preacher's ignorance; for it is an ascertained fact, that there are heavenly bodies of a magnitude so far exceeding that of the earth, that you might as well speak of the great lakes being poured into a draw-well, as of the stars falling into the earth.

In like manner, I think that the meaning we might be ready to attach to those descriptions of events, that are to transpire at the ushering in of the day of the Lord—the meaning that we might think the plain reading made obvious and indisputable, may not be the real meaning after all. And, in order to maintain this position, it is not at all necessary to resolve the expressions into figures, far less to dissolve them into unmeaning verbiage.

Thus, in regard to the phrase, "New Earth;" a sinner here saved by Christ, and regenerated by the Spirit of God, is called in Scripture, "A new man" with perfect propriety, though he is the same person still, only changed by grace—"renewed in the spirit of his mind."—Now, why might not this old earth, restored by God to pristine beauty, and adapted for the reception of holy inhabitants, be called with equal propriety, "a New Earth?" If a sainted spirit, now with God, can be re-united to the body that was mortal once, but that shall be immortal then; if that new man in the highest sense, can be the same who hung a dying thief beside Jesus, and heard Him say in his hour of agony, "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise;" if God can work such marvellous changes on men, why could He not work an analogous change upon this earth; and if He did, would it not be, in truth, "a New Earth?" With respect to the quotations from Psalm cii. and Isaiah, about the heavens vanishing away;—earth waxing old like a garment;—changing;—perishing;—can it be difficult for any one gifted with ordinary intelligence, to suppose that the change wrought on the present state of things, which is probably all that is meant, may be a revolution so complete, brought about by a catastrophe so overwhelming, and resulting in a transformation so glorious, as to realize in the most perfect manner the predictions of the inspired writers?

The mankind which God created at first is the mankind of to-day. The earth He formed, is the earth we dwell in now. Yet when man cast away his crown of beauty, and was excluded from paradise, from God, and heavenly beings; when the very ground was cursed for his sake, he became, in a sad sense, a very different man from what he had been; and that earth became another and a very different earth—old things passed away then, all things became new, to man's bitter experience.—So once again, when redemption is completed, and the day of consummation has come, if God were to take His curse from earth, and place on it his blessing; if He were to form new and intimate connexions between that earth and the heavenly world; if He established new relations between Himself and His ransomed creatures, and between these and all holy creatures,—might we not say, old heaven and earth have passed away, and a new world has begun? So also the explicit statements of the Apostle Peter, respecting the melting of the elements with fervent heat,—the burning up of earth and the works therein,—and the dissolution of these things, may be verified to the letter, all on the supposition that this globe may become hereafter the fit abode of intelligent and happy creatures. Even now this solid globe, as we call

it, has nothing solid about it, but its covering or surface; a covering so thin in comparison with its diameter, as to be fitly called the crust of the earth, though on it are reared the lofty mountains, and in it deep oceans scoop their bed. And, it is conjectured that beneath that crust, filling the vast abyss, is fire that has burned since the world began;—literally elements molten with fervent heat. Beside us, beneath our feet, may be the tremendous agent raging, ready to break through the barriers which confine it, to lick up with all devouring flame the earth that now is, and the works therein, whenever God shall give the word. We have seeming evidence for this in the plutonic rocks upheaved from their place at earth's deep foundations by the force of that internal fire,—in the string of active and extinct volcanoes which engirdle the globe,—and in the earthquake's shock, so justly regarded with direst apprehension. And we know that convulsions and changes have taken place upon this globe before, and that fire, "fervent heat," has played its part in the repeated revolutions which have occurred, ere yet the earth was made the abode of man. Why may it not act once more in the final revolution, and become an agent in the reconstructing of a glorious earth for glorified inhabitants? That would be but the crowning act of a series already known to have transpired. Says the celebrated, and now lamented Hugh Miller, "By piecing the two records," (that revealed in Scripture, and that written in the rocks,) "together, records which, however widely geologists may mistake the one, or commentators misunderstand the other, have emanated from the same Great Author, we learn that in slow and solemn majesty has period succeeded period in the history of earth, each in succession ushering in a higher and yet higher scene of existence, . . . we learn that this passing scene is not the final one, in the long series, but merely the last of the preliminary scenes; and that period," (the final one,) "to which the bygone ages, incalculable in amount, with all their well-proportioned gradations of being, form the imposing vestibule, shall have perfection for its occupant, and eternity for its duration."

But may not the Apostle, in speaking of dissolving elements, &c., be employing the old prophetic metaphors simply to describe the metamorphosis, chiefly of a moral kind, which passing on men, shall completely change the old into a new world? So scripture may be fulfilled, and this old earth made new, as man is made a new creature, may be the blessed abode of its redeemed and holy inhabitants. How interesting the thought! God made this earth very good. Must He annihilate it? Has He been baffled by the power of evil? It is ruined now. How worthy

of Him to restore the old fabric as He redeems those who dwell therein! All men had their home here. Every spot of earth is hallowed or desecrated. Each foot of its surface shall be known and interesting to some one of the multitude no man can number. How kind of God, if He presented to man as his eternal happy home that earth, with the stains of its battle fields, dens of infamy, thrones of iniquity, and Gehennas of every kind, all washed away,—lit up by heaven's sunlight,—and its scenes where quiet well-doing sung its hymn of praise to God, where patient suffering said, "Thy will be done," where heroic devotion stood alone for truth,—all its Bethels, Bethesdas, and its Calvary, known, and shining with a lustre such as was never seen in the olden time! What a world of wonders it would be for all to look upon, and learn, and improve, and adore.

This, however, is but opinion,—it may be,—it is likely; but what is of greater consequence is this,—there shall be "a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness"—a terrestrial abode—a proper rest, and field for exertion, for immortal men. There shall be again, may we not suppose, verdant plains, cultivated fields, mountains rising to the clouds, rivers running to the sea, oceans unruffled by storms, and laving with crystal waves shores, which goodness, and peace, and love have made their own? There shall be again, may we not think, populous cities, busy marts, congregations of holy worshippers, and happy homes? And that bright world shall be peopled by a race claiming kindred with the skies—God's chosen, and redeemed, and adopted children, all bearing the lineaments of the Father in heaven—all united in brotherhood to Jesus and to one another—all abounding in the fruits of righteousness, to the praise of restoring Love!

What! work and commerce! the same troublous life over again! Where then the rest—the eternal Sabbaths—the unceasing sound of golden harps? All that shall be, in truth, but in another manner than most men suppose. The rest and the service of heaven, and the dreamy inanities which weakness has fondly depicted as the ecstasy of bliss, will be found to have nothing in common. The New Earth will be the abode of *Men*.

4. In that new earth there will be found provision for perfected humanity—aliment and exercise for all its inhabitants—having respect to the physical, intellectual, and emotional, as well as the moral nature of the new man.

All derived life is supported by nutriment adapted for it, provided

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by God, and to be labored for. No change of place or circumstance—no exaltation in the scale of being, can alter or nullify the absolute and universal law, under which creature-life is placed. That life originates in God, and is sustained by God, through means of suitable nourishment which He furnishes. In trying to think of this law in the world to come, we are ready to judge of it as we see the operation here, and so are led into conceptions so gross that, to escape from them, we, in effect, ignore the existence and operations of the law in the future state altogether. We cannot think of food, now so necessary to prolong existence, without thinking of waste, reproduction, and decay, which retarded for a while, at length baffles all efforts to stay it, proceeds faster and farther than all restoratives, and terminates in death. Man is mortal here, and Death lurks in every thing we meet, and touch, and taste. Growth and health, the evidences of mortal life in its best estate, are assurances of coming death. The infant's course from helplessness to manhood is a progress to the grave. And the maturity of life is but the half way house between the birth and the last quiet sleep of mortality under "the clods of the valley."

But there will be no death, where just men made perfect dwell; and so we have generally leaped to the irrational and unscriptural conclusion, that there shall be no need for what sustains life in the future world. No bread!

Now, even here, "man does not live by bread alone," &c. The mortal part has food provided for it, or it dies,—and the spirit must have food provided for it, or it too, dies—as spirits die. And that spiritual food we must seek and toil for, ere we obtain it, just as in the case of the natural food. "Labor not," says Christ, "for the bread which perisheth, but for that, which endureth unto everlasting life."—And so in the world to come, there will be food for glorified humanity:—the spiritual body, the unfettered intellect, and the spotless soul, all shall have nourishment suited to their nature, and labored for. There shall be industry in the new earth,—occasion for it, calls to it, and pleasure in it. And then and thus, shall man attain to the chief end of his being, which is to enjoy God, and glorify Him with *his body*, and *his spirit*, which are God's.

Here, labor is indispensable to happiness and healthy existence, as well as to usefulness. Duty to God cannot be dis severed from duty we owe to ourselves and fellow-men. And duty to God consists, not in devotion alone, but in devotion and well-doing. True religion is not confined to, nor exhausted by the exercise of divine worship; it does

not end with with the soul's most intimate communings with Him who is enthroned on "the mercy seat;" rather, it obtains there a stimulus and strength for the prosecution of that work, which is at once its essence and its evidence, "*the doing justly, and loving mercy, and walking humbly with God.*" True religion does not scowl with misanthropic aversion upon innocent recreation, or the ebullition of joyous feelings which God has implanted in man; it does not prefer the hermit's cell to the wide field of the world which calls all our energies into play; it does not stigmatize art as devilish, science as godless, lawful employment as secular and profane; but it comes with a hallowing leaven to imbue and consecrate all art, all science, all work to the Great Jehovah. And it constrains its subjects, in blamelessness of life, in kindness of heart, in industrious occupation, in assiduous cultivation of the mind, in cheerful well-doing, and, if need be, in patient suffering, as much as in the temple where they sing His praise, to glorify their God.

This principle in true religion, is not confined to this world, nor will it be unknown when this world has passed away. On all God's works in the universe is written what he that runs might read, *Work, and Worship*. God Himself, who dwelleth on high, "who needeth not anything, seeing that he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things," works unceasingly. He is, and He shall be through eternity, the God that doeth wonders by His strong right arm. Angels who see His face and sing His praise, work, as happy, as truly His servants, as honourably engaged when employed in work in a far distant world, as when bowed before the throne. Man, in his state of innocence, when he did glorify and enjoy his God, was set to till the garden of Eden. And when Eden is restored—when the new earth is peopled by its holy inhabitants, there will be work in it for *their hands, and heads, and hearts*—a service of doing, and a service of song, which together shall form the life exercise, the felicity, and the glory of the ransomed throng.

As it would be silly and presumptuous to pretend to tell what specific works shall engage the powers of the glorified body, so it is equally beyond our ability to tell what prospects shall open before the unclouded mind of the new man. Here the human mind is characterized by restless activity and progressive advancement and enlargement:—we have instincts as have the lower animals:—we have intuitions peculiar to us as the intelligent offspring of the all-creating spirit:—and we have an acquired knowledge derived from the stores and traditions of the past, which is increased continually, by new research and discovery

What would we be if, notwithstanding all that has been lost in the revolutions of time, we had not the riches of thought of former ages to call our own? What would we be if we had no food for thought every day, and no occasion nor call for ingenuity and study? What would we be if we had not realms, extending farther than the distant star, and deeper than the abyss, whither, when every other faculty fails, we can betake ourselves on the wings of imagination? Yet here we are limited on every side; there is a bound which no created intellect can pass:—there may be mental progression to a certain point, and the mass of men, by education and culture, may advance from their present standing to a height that seems lost in the heavens, but men have reached that point, and men shall never occupy a higher here. But there, in that new earth, there will be a wider field, a clearer vision, and new and unheard of means of advancement. There will be minds enlarged, engaged in deep research and great thought,—and ever, as new wonders break upon the understanding, filled with a mightier and more glowing devotion. There will be no limit to science, there will be a universe to furnish facts, and the intellect, though still of necessity a finite intellect, will start in its explorations from a higher stand-point, and career a gigantic intelligence, before which Newton's would shrink to comparative imbecility, through an expanse that might be called infinitude—eternally progressing in the knowledge and enjoyment of good.

And there shall the heart of perfect man have its sweetest, and purest, and noblest emotions called forth. There will be friendships never decaying, never deceiving, never heart-breaking by sharp, abrupt severance of ties that bind souls together, never heart withering and crushing, by lingering tortures slowly rending strand by strand of the uniting cord.

There will be pure relationships—more dear than the most endearing on earth,—not restricted as necessarily now, to one true heart, or to one little band, but extending to all the members of the family of God, with thrilling memories of the past, and with undimmed and undivided hopes of an ever brightening future.

There will be scenes of surpassing loveliness to melt the spirit with the overpowering sense of beauty, and scenes of surpassing grandeur to inspire the spirit with the exalted and sublime. And there will be bounties and blessings—a profusion of good in never-ceasing, never-lessening stream from God the Father of all—awakening ever more recollections of His goodness and mercy in the days of the pilgrimage—

exciting evermore grand thoughts of love for the Greatest and Best of Beings—opening evermore new fountains of grateful emotion to flow for Him, and of tenderest affection for all fellow-partakers of that grace and glory.

One class of emotions alone will find neither place nor provision there, though beautiful and necessary in this present state; there will be no pity, no compassion, nor sighs, nor tears, nor heavy hearts;—none needs commiseration there. No pain, sickness, want, nor woe, no calamities, no partings, nor bitterness of soul in the happy land. If ye would prize “the blessing of him that is ready to perish,” seek it now; if ye would do good as ye have opportunity, do it now; for there will be no poor and needy ones there! Nor will there be indignation, nor even just resentment there, because there shall be no craft, nor wrong, nor one unholy in the land of the blest.

In that new earth there “dwelleth *righteousness*.” Simple, but grand expressive words. Thorough, perfect *righteousness* is there.—*RIGHTNESS* with no *WRONGNESS* at all! Righteousness, not looking down from heaven high, as it did upon old earth, as if it wished to alight but could find no place for the sole of its foot, but *dwelling at home* in that fair world. Righteousness, not in the breasts of some exalted saints, or, as once on earth, in Emmanuel alone, but the very spirit-life and moral essence of all redeemed humanity. Righteousness,—the complement of all virtues,—the consummation of all graces—the crown which the Lord, the righteous Judge shall give, and which they all shall wear, who, looking to, and for Jesus, fight the good fight, and finish their course, keeping the faith.

Such or such like, we gather from the intimations of God’s word, and the survey of His works, shall be the “new earth.” And such the character and joys of its blessed inhabitants. The Father loves them. And they are beginning to learn “what is the length and breadth, and depth and height of the love of God which passeth understanding.”

Thus far, our contemplation of the Christian’s heritage in “the world to come,” has been confined to the new earth and its inhabitants. In order to complete the view, to form and fix in our minds a more entire and definite conception of the future state of glory, it is requisite that we next give attention to the “new heavens” as distinguished from, and yet connected with that “new earth.” In endeavouring to pursue the course thus indicated, let us, as before, take the Bible for our guide,

and by cautious induction try to gather together and understand the intimations it affords, and then look upon the conclusions to which they lead.

By the terms "Heaven," and "Heavens," Scripture designates:—

1. The firmament—the atmospheric expanse surrounding the earth, in which the light and heat of the heavenly bodies are diffused, where the clouds are formed, whence the rains descend, and many varied natural agencies are in operation for the benefit of earth and its occupants. "God called the firmament, heaven," Gen. i. 8. "God give thee of the dew of heaven," Gen. xxvii. 28. "The heaven that is over thy head shall be brass," Dent. xxviii. 23. "See if I will not open the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing," Mal. iii. 10.

2. The starry worlds, as seen from earth, and the creatures of God who may have their dwelling in them. "Thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, . . . and the host of heaven worshippeth Thee," Neh. ix. 6. "When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy," Job. xxxviii. 7. "He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven," Dan. iv. 35.

3. The purity, happiness, and other excellencies of unfallen, and of saved and sanctified intelligent beings,—as holy angels, and redeemed men. "Let heaven and earth praise Him," Ps. lxxix. 34. "Joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth," Luke xv. 7. "The kingdom of heaven is at hand," Matt. iv. 17. "The kingdom of God is within you," Luke xvii. 21. "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost," Rom. xiv. 17.

4. The throne and temple of the Divine Majesty, where infinitely beyond all other manifestations, the glory of Jehovah is displayed,— "Is not God in the height of heaven," Job xxii. 12. "The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool," Isa. lxvi. 1. "Hear thou in heaven Thy dwelling place," 1 Kings. viii. 30. "My Father's house," John xiv. 2.

Such are the prominent distinctive significations of the words, "heaven" and "heavens," in the Scriptures; and, keeping them in mind, surely we will not stray widely from the truth, nor be chargeable with rash assumption, if we suppose that the heaven of the future will be "new heavens" in each of the senses mentioned, and that we have, in the combination of them all, a description of what these "new heavens" shall be to the inhabitants of the earth wherein dwelleth righteousness,

at least, approximating as nearly to the actual as it would be possible for us to understand in the present state.

Following the method suggested by the supposition just made, our thoughts will for a while yet, be necessarily directed to the new earth and those who dwell therein, but to them as related to the new heavens, and as affected by the influences, physical and moral, proceeding thence—the influences exerted by the celestial upon the terrestrial in the world to come.

I. We may think, then, of the "new heavens" as a new firmament, an upper region of air and azure sky encircling the renovated world. A heaven high, presenting to the gaze of the dwellers below a celestial glory, far transcending that of the heavens we now see, shedding over the new earth light, and color, and beauty, and exerting on it sweeter influences than Orion and the Pleiades, than sun, and moon, and the starry hosts have done in the present economy. The heavens and the earth that are now, or as now constituted, are to pass away. "All these things shall be dissolved." But that predicted catastrophe is not to bring chaos back again, it is to bring in the cosmos. It is to be the closing scene in a long series of wonderful events all shaded by imperfection and sin, and the opening scene in another series of wonderful events, which are to unfold in the endless ages without a shadow of any kind to darken them. It is to be the destruction of the degraded, the conclusion of the temporal, and the establishment of the perfect and the eternal. This is the redemption for which all nature waits; "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together," working towards this consummation. For this the Christian prays, "Thy kingdom come"—the restitution of all things good and lovely and true, which were lost, or stained by sin on earth, and the gathering of all things into one by Christ.

Now whether we assume the "new earth" to be this old earth renovated, or another globe, is of no consequence, does not affect the conclusion to which we are led, namely, that the change to be brought about at the final day will be universal and complete, a change to the best possible condition of all things; and, therefore, the heavenly bodies that look down upon the earth, the atmospheric influences that affect it, and its own surface disposition which, in connection with the atmosphere, determines the character of climate, shall all be so ordered and arranged by the wise and loving God, as to produce results at once transcendently beautiful and beneficial.

In the system of worlds to which our earth belongs, there are planets at a vastly greater distance from the sun than others, and consequently prevented from sharing, to the same extent, in the benefits of solar light and heat. But this deficiency seems to be compensated by the number of secondary planets with which they are supplied; one has four, another six, and another seven satellites; one, if not more, has a luminous ring or belt around it, maintaining perhaps continual day in that globe. Already we know of worlds of which it might almost be said, "Their sun goes not down, neither does their moon withdraw itself," and in some such way God's new earth may possess an encircling celestial glory, a new firmament, with lights therein above the brightness of the sun, and literally "no night there."

The earth, as at present constituted, is subject to various atmospheric influences, which, being in their turn modified by the surface-conditions of different areas, are in certain circumstances baneful, though obviously they are designed to be, and mainly are, highly beneficial and indispensable to natural life of every kind. We have warm, cold and temperate climates. There are hot winds and sea-currents which convey warmth, and minister to life in cold regions; and cold winds and currents which temper the heat of tropical climes, and invigorate their languid inhabitants. The burning simoom generated in the parched desert, sweeps on in its destructive career, withering vegetation and prostrating man. The bitter northern blast brings frost, and snow, and driving sleet, spreading o'er earth winter's dreariness, benumbing the unsheltered traveller, and increasing the hardships and woes of poverty, and sickness, and old age. And the malaria arising from the rank growths and putridities of the steaming marsh, infects with its fever-breath the dwellers in the valleys over which it hovers, and sometimes starts the pestilence to traverse country after country around the globe, turning everywhere happy homes into houses of mourning.

In respect to these phenomena, we know for most part by what natural causes they are produced, and understand how, by other conformation, and disposition, and level of land and water, the evils referred to might be mitigated and even done away.

Thus, in this land we are exposed to extreme heat and cold in the alternate seasons. Sailing due east across the Atlantic, we reach the South of France, and find the most genial climate of Europe; while considerably farther north than the parallel on which we are situated, in the British islands, such a breadth of divergence in the temperature between summer and winter as we are subjected to, is unknown. The

reason of this is, that to the north of us the broad continent extends far within the arctic circle to the frozen ocean, with no warm sea-current flowing towards it, nor soft winds blowing over it, to mitigate the severity of the rigorous winter; and to the south of us there is the broad continent again, not intersected by cooling seas nor lofty mountain ranges, to impart a freshness to the heated air, in the summer season. The Gulf of Mexico, scooped out of the centre of America, forms a great sea-basin whose waters, heated as in a cauldron, flow out and run northward, then, diverted by the projecting land, more easterly towards north-western Europe, and give those regions their mildness of climate in comparison with ours.

Again, an arid desert of utter desolation covers almost the whole extent of Northern Africa; while farther south, nearer to the equator, more directly under the hot sun on that same continent, there are, it is now known, the most fertile lands and as fine a climate as is to be found. The reason is, that the north is a depressed, flat expanse, unwatered, burned up; while the south is more elevated, with great lakes, and mountain ranges whose towering peaks are mantled with snow, and down whose sides streams are running to rivers winding through rich valleys to the sea.

Even here now, a change in the conformation of continents, an altered disposition of the earth's surface—its depression in one area, its elevation in another, would change climates, might make all temperate, healthful and fruitful, and render every breath of air life-giving and pure. Perhaps like this, earth would have been, but for man's apostasy: it is not as it was; that some portions of it now bleak and wintry were once under a more genial sky is proved beyond a doubt by abundant fossil remains. And in some such manner may the new earth be so laid out that "the precious things of the heavens" shall pour down in affluence on it, "the precious fruits brought forth by the sun, and the precious things put forth by the moon." "The inhabitants shall never say, We are sick." Above them the glorious sky—the curtain of God's pavilion. Around them fertility and adornment on every side, with fragrance and music in every breeze. And beneath their feet the green sward mottled with flowers, forming fit carpet for their mansion in the Father's house. Such an earth, with such a firmament above it, would form in this sense "new heavens" for the ransomed of the Lord.

2. Turning our attention next to the second, the wider and

higher signification of the stars and their inmates, given to the word "heavens" in the Bible,—we may think of the "new heavens" as indicating another element in the blessedness of the inhabitants of the new earth;—that which will arise from their standing in a new relation to, and a new connection with sidereal worlds and the creatures of God who dwell in them.

Such knowledge of the heavenly bodies as we can obtain, has always been interesting and useful to man. The stars, which seem to a superficial observer innumerable, have been numbered—all of them that are discernible by the unaided vision; but then, as soon as instruments are employed to assist the eye, more and more appear: the most powerful telescope of recent times does not enable us to discover one blank in the immense expanse which the Creator has not filled with worlds.

The canopy of heaven has been mapped out; the stars visible in it have been arranged in clusters or constellations; and they have been classified as fixed stars, suns, planets, satellites, comets and nebulae. The distance of many of these bodies from the earth and sun, their magnitude and motions have been ascertained. A hazy glimpse of one half of the surface of our moon has been had. There is some knowledge and more conjecture as to the nature and extent of the influence exerted upon this globe by other orbs singly, and in various conjunctions. And, except that God created them, we know nothing more of "the hosts of heaven."

That these worlds are as beautiful and well-ordered in their economical arrangements as they appear beautiful and regulated in all their movements to us, we may well believe; and that they are inhabited by intelligent creatures is altogether likely. Every process of reasoning tends to such a conclusion. We do not know, indeed: we have not seen the inhabitants of other spheres, nor has it been revealed in so many words that the stars have inmates. How little we know of God's works, confined as we are to this speck of earth! How vast the range of observation and inquiry, now beyond our reach, which we may be employed exploring during the eternal ages! But, that the whole heavens are filled with intelligent and holy life: that the beings called angels in Scripture, and such like beings, have their dwelling among these stars that spangle our sky is surely no extravagant assumption. And when the heavens that now are have passed away, the inhabitant of the new earth, qualified by intellectual capacity, and furnished with facilities for advancing in all knowledge, will learn in new conditions

and relations a perfect astronomy, accompanied with a biology of celestial beings but dimly guessed at before. For if these orbs of heaven be not tenantless,—and who can believe that the countless hosts were created and are sustained merely for the purpose of casting light upon, and effecting some mechanical process in the sea and air of this globe of ours?—if they are the seats of active, intellectual, and spiritual life,—and we can hardly doubt it,—then there will be intercourse between their inhabitants and those of the happy earth. There will be then a recognition of the unity of the whole family of God, and intercommunion between its members of every origin. Then in the most comprehensive literal sense, the redeemed shall have “come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant.”

Intercourse with the whole family of God; that, at any rate, cannot be questioned. Why, even here, and now, angels, whatever kind or kinds of beings they be, and whence soever they come, can visit us. They are not only spirits ministering before the throne; they are guardians, sent forth to minister to them who are heirs of salvation. Will they not continue to visit the heirs when these have come into the possession of the heritage? Here we neither see nor hear the heavenly messengers, however beneficent their good offices may be; but there we shall see and converse with God's first-born sons, and acquire a knowledge of their history and nature, and learn from them their experience and estimate of God.

How interesting to think only of familiar intimacy among the redeemed themselves! To listen to Adam describing the beauty of sinless paradise,—his first consciousness of guilt,—his overwhelming horror at the fuller discovery of the nature of sin,—and his emotions when the gracious promise turned the terrible darkness into a day of hope. To know Abraham as our friend, who bore the honorable appellation of friend of God; to hear him tell of the olden time and its manners,—of the fearful doom of Sodom,—of his feelings just when the angel stayed his hand, and pointed to the ram caught in the thicket, indicating even then how the Lamb of God saves the chosen seed. To converse with Paul about Jewish sects and Grecian schools: to hear from his own lips the story of his conversion, and what took place in the jail at Philippi, and how Nero looked, and Rome, in these bygone

days; and learn all about his adventures by field and flood when, "though the least of all saints," to him was the grace given to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ. To understand exactly what kind of men the noble army of martyrs and confessors of every land and age were, to hear them speak in their several ways of the work of grace as exemplified in their various histories. And to meet there also the men that are yet to come and do God's work on earth,—to talk with Africans and Asiatics, men of every clime and language, and of every stage of social and moral progress, that have done anything for Christ's cause, having been redeemed by Christ's grace. Surely there will be deepest interest, and precious instruction and joy in all that. But besides, glorified men shall have fellowship with angels, with holy beings from other—from all worlds: and the intercourse will be mutual.

The bright spirits above are endowed with powers by which they can pass from world to world in God's service. May we not conclude that in this respect saved men shall be "as the angels of God?" that as God's servants they too shall be gifted with faculties enabling them to survey God's works everywhere, and to learn from all His creatures new cause to sing, and it may be new ways of singing the praises of the glorious King of earth and heaven.

Recurring to a statement made before,—all God's works that we can scan are progressive: development, advancement, characterize them all. Man progresses in knowledge and religion; christianity, with its principles fully revealed, unfolds new beauties and enlarging applications in each succeeding age. All things are in motion, and all, except sin and sin-cursed beings, are moving towards a higher destination. Are not these indications and parts of a universal and eternal law? May there not be an ascending to a nobler and a nobler state of existence in the world to come? Is it a groundless fancy to suppose that there shall be a ceaseless progression, and transition or translation from world to world of the many mansions in a series reaching to the noblest, the Holiest of all, where God dwells in the light that is inaccessible and full of glory?

And may we not think of the redeemed in the kingdom prepared for them, all having intercourse with all. All filled to the extent of their capacity with the love and joy of God, and all in the long eternity ascending in serried rank to sphere after sphere of growing beauty, exploring the mansions above with entrancing delight, and coming by turns into direct and intimate connexion with every order of holy being, and with the God within them all? This would be "new heavens" for them in a very precious sense.

3. Having respect to the third class of significations given to the terms "heaven" and "heavens" in Scripture—those which refer to the spiritual purity, the God-likeness of saved and holy creatures. We may next think of the "new heavens" as denoting the entire heavenly-mindedness of those counted worthy to obtain a place in the glorious kingdom of God.

This is just a reference to perfection of character again, which has been already noticed in another connexion, and may be therefore dismissed with brief remark.

Heavenly-mindedness shall be the characteristic of glorified men. It is the sentiment and the mould and spirit of life in the kingdom. From God who sits upon the throne, down through the ranks of cherubim and seraphim and angels and men, to the least in heaven, all are heavenly-minded. Regarding the new earth as one of the many mansions, and redeemed men as one of many classes of holy creatures, they, with all worlds and all their inhabitants, shall be one in spirit, "holy," to the extent of created capacity, "as God is holy." Purity in every thought, righteousness in every action, harmony in all relations, ties of holy brotherhood, bind together all the members of the family that is named after and provided for by the Son of God. Ties of filiation and affinity bind them to God Himself. They are all the Sons of God—the first and the last born—and all like their Father, seeing Him as He is. "The kingdom of God is within them."

4. One other element in the blessedness of Christ's redeemed in the world to come—the best of all, and the ground of all other blessing—remains to be considered.

Scripture means by the term "heaven," in the highest sense, the Throne and dwelling-place of Almighty God. This signification of the word suggests to us, in connection with the promise of the "new heavens," the thought that, in that fair world where the ransomed of the Lord dwell with Him and see His glory, they shall have a knowledge of, and a liberty of access to the Holiest place, and to Him who sanctifies it with His immediate presence, and this in a manner so infinitely superior to all former communion with God, that it is fitly described by the phrase "new heavens."

In the solar system all the planets revolve around the sun in their respective orbits. It is more than conjectured by men of science that our sun and other suns, with all their dependent planets, revolve in almost measureless orbits round a more glorious central sun, which

retains all worlds in connection with itself, regulates their movements, and maintains harmonious action among them. Revelation, as well as science, points to this central sun, and calls it the throne of the Lord of Hosts, where sits the Creator and King, sustaining and controlling the submissive universe.

God is indeed in all His works; they all declare His glory; but Scripture speaks of one high and holy place where Jehovah dwells,—where, more than anywhere else, He displays His majesty, and receives the homage of His beloved and loving subjects. Everywhere in the new heavens and new earth shall the traces of His footsteps be seen, and in all objects shall be recognized the impressions of His wisdom, truth, and love. But around that visible throne, within that temple in the midst of heaven, shall be clustered together all the beauty, and the worth, all the goodness and the grandeur, the scattering rays from which gave glory to all worlds and beings they fell upon.

How awful, and yet how entrancing is that throne! With overshadowing cherubim, and seraphs kneeling round, veiling their faces with golden wings: with angel chorus pealing, and voices of redeemed sinners blending with the thrilling, overcoming strains of heaven's adoring melodies. Who can speak of that?

If eye hath not seen, nor ear heard: if it is known to none beside God, what He hath prepared for them that wait for Him, what must His own glory be? what the glory of the Lamb in the midst of that throne? If the momentary vision, seen through the surrounding haze of mortality, be so dazzlingly beautiful that description falters, then ceases to speak, or articulates with choking voice, as in the words of Paul, "I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago (whether in the body I cannot tell, or out of the body I cannot tell: God knoweth); such an one caught up to the third heaven. I knew such a man, how that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful" (possible) "for a man to utter." If this be all, or the best, one to whom the revelation was given can say, who needs attempt to describe the Throne of God? That throne is a reality, however, as sure as now is the throne of grace; and as there is access to the latter here by "the new and living way," so there shall be access to the former above for all the blood-washed and holy creatures of God.

Attention has been recently called to an interesting branch of study in one department of natural science by a gifted and trustworthy author, Dr. McCosh, in "*Typical forms and special ends in creation.*" In this work it is affirmed that in the material universe a principle of

order rules, or there is "a general plan, pattern, or type, to which every given object is made to conform with more or less precision." More, everything formed by God in a lower sphere and order, has homologues and analogues in a higher. In this we have evidence of One designing mind, and of a unity, and harmony in plan, through all God's works. By this, too, means of culture are furnished for all our faculties now, and for a better state and higher knowledge. The same author says: "All animal bodies point to man as the apex of the earthly hierarchy. Professor Owen tells us that all the parts and organs of man had been sketched out, in anticipation, so to speak, in the inferior animals.' But may not this higher form on earth point to a still higher form? Man's body on earth may be but a prefiguration of his body in heaven. But some will say, How are the dead raised up, and with what body do they come? The apostle does not give a direct answer to this question, but he points to certain analogies, or rather homœophytes, which show that while the body preserves its identity, it will be changed into a nobler form, as the seed is changed when it springs up as a plant. In heaven, then, our bodies are to be after a higher model, 'spiritual' and 'celestial.' It doth not yet appear what we shall be, but being planted in the likeness of His death, we shall also be planted in the likeness of His resurrection, and when He appears we shall be like Him. Our bodies shall then be fashioned like unto His glorious body, which we may conceive to be the most sublimated and obedient form and modification of material agency; and modern science, while it cannot efface the indelible distinction between mind and matter, is every day enlarging our conceptions of the capacities of matter. Thus, the simplest organism points by its structure upward to man, and man's earthly frame points to his heavenly frame, and his heavenly frame to Christ's spiritual body—and we see that all animated things on earth point onward to His glorified humanity as the grand Archetype of all that has life."

The confirmation which this passage gives to views advanced in a preceding part of this essay, will be apparent to the reader; but it is quoted for the purpose of helping us in the consideration of some other analogies. If there are typical forms in creation—patterns and prefigurations on a lower platform of better and more perfect forms upon a higher—have we not reason to conclude that, in like manner, there are typical forms—patterns and foreshadowings of better things to come—in the ordinances and ways of God in His present administration of providence and grace?

In the church of old there were festive days, when the tribes of Israel went up, all the families of the land—the men, their wives, and their little ones together, to appear before the Lord in His holy place: when the roads leading to Jerusalem were thronged with travellers, and the “city of solemnities” and temple courts were filled with devout and happy worshippers. And though often at last, much of the seeming devotion was but hollow show, yet many and many a time in Israel’s history their passovers and pentecosts were times of joy and refreshing.

In the Christian church too, though it possesses no visible temple of which God says exclusively, “Here will I stay, for I do like it,” there is the spiritual temple in which God the Spirit dwells: there are festive seasons—times of special access to the mercy-seat, of special approach and communion with the Father, with Jesus and saints in gospel ordinances. Why may we not regard these as typical forms of what shall be hereafter, of festival, of access to God, and high communion with Him and all His family in the state of glory?

We may thus think—that there, where the glorious God has gathered around Him all His majesty, where unseen, yet present and declared Deity is enthroned, will “the gathering of the people be:” to that Temple of the Universe shall go up with harp and song, with offerings, and homage, and burning love, not tribes of Israel alone, not even all kindreds and tongues of earth alone, but all worlds shall pour forth their myriads, and from one end of heaven to the other shall they assemble, and ascend the hill of God, to prostrate themselves in lowly reverence before that August Presence, to feast upon His love in the house of their Father, to drink of the rivers of His pleasures, and to mingle their hallelujahs till the melodious strains swell louder than the voice of many waters, attuning every element in their being in harmony with the nature of the God they adore.

What times of refreshing then from the presence of Jehovah, and never to be followed by declension and languor! Never!

That we can think such thoughts! That we can gaze on such a vision, at such a distance! We, poor creatures of a day, crushed before the moth, stained all with sin. Rebels against that God! And yet to us the hope is given, to us the way is laid open, and we are invited to that new world, to that glorious throne, and to Him who redeems, and qualifies for dwelling there.

This representation of the “new heavens and the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness”—not so entirely unlike the present heavens and earth as we may have imagined, yet warranted, it is

THE NEW HEAVENS.

believed, by all we know of the Word and works of God—is given in a humble effort towards the foreshadowing of that happy state where ransomed and restored man shall meet all the requisites of perfect humanity, fulfil the end of his being, and be perfectly blessed in the full enjoyment of God for ever.

As represented, it is a state of existence, with elements in it to evoke all our sympathies, to exercise in highest pursuits all our faculties, to enlist and elevate all our affections and desires: its social happiness is secured by an intelligent, holy companionship: and its felicity is completed and crowned by a God and Saviour to know, and love, and serve, and praise for ever.

May the delineation have the effect of leading those who look upon it to think more frequently of heaven as "the Father's house," and "the sweet home" of the followers of Jesus, than even Christians generally do; and may it further tend to induce them to seek now the grace that culminates in glory, that so an entrance may be ministered unto them abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

We have seen that the "new heavens, and new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness," is a state of existence wherein humanity is restored from the ruins of the fall, renewed unto perfection, and exalted to a sphere of glory, where all its powers find meet employment, all its beauties are unfolded, and all its excellencies are developed in an endless career of progression:—where all circumstances are designed and fitted to afford gratification, to call into exercise blissful thought and feeling and effort, and to furnish matter for unceasing praise:—where the Glory of the Divine Majesty, and the Glory of the Divine Love beaming on all, and irradiating that heaven and earth, form the Light of the Eternal Day. For such a state of being, assured to them by the promise of God, the faithful followers of Jesus have looked and longed in every age: and the prospect has ever been to them an encouragement, and a directory in the discharge of Christian duty.

There are pre-eminently two effects that will naturally follow the believing view of this prospect of the saints' inheritance: First, an emotional one; the man who looks upon the representation, and relies upon it as a truthful foreshadowing of what God hath prepared for them that love Him, will be filled with emotions of desire, hope, joy, with gratitude to the Redeemer, and increasing love to Him and to all that He loves and ordains: and secondly; a practical effect,—the man

who realizes this vision of paradise, and whose spirit thrills with the emotions referred to, will be stimulated to every virtuous exertion, to active and patient well-doing, to meek resignation under present disappointments and sufferings, and to assiduous cultivation of every faculty that is to be exercised, and of every budding grace that is to be unfolded in the better world. He will bless the Lord for the Unspeakable Gift; he will draw closer to Jesus the anchor of his soul and the pattern of the Christian life; he will cherish godly fear and love; and it will be his steadfast aim to carry out in practice, in all relations and circumstances, the precepts of the holy law which the Sanctifier has written on his heart.

Some brief observations in reference to the practical issue springing from the contemplation of the future state of the redeemed, may fitly and usefully close this essay. For while the prospect of glory in the world to come will naturally excite every soul looking heavenward, it is still necessary to enjoin dutifulness, and to direct it to the proper channel and end. So does the Apostle, whose words about the new heavens and earth have formed the groundwork of all our considerations: immediately after stating what Christians looked for, according to God's promise, he adds—"Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of Him in peace, without spot, and blameless."

A proper diligence in this matter, as in every other, takes its special direction and characteristics from the object desired, and the advantage to be gained by its pursuit. It is God we are to meet with. The prospect before us is the bright abode of perfect humanity and of holy angels,—the being for ever with the Lord; therefore the diligence enjoined is a diligent attention to the improvement of everything really and properly human about us,—a diligent cultivation of every gracious principle the Holy Spirit has implanted, or is ready to implant within us,—and a diligent use of all commanded means for the accomplishment of both ends. In other words, the prospect of new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness, suggests to the intelligent and thoughtful mind the necessity of preparation, and a preparation affecting the material, intellectual, moral, and religious nature of man, as requisite for admission into, and enjoyment of that state where perfect human beings rejoice in God their Saviour, and where that holy God presides—honored, loved, and served by every member of His innumerable family.

The human body God formed at first from the dust. It is fear-

fully and wonderfully made, with the most curiously contrived, nicely adjusted, sweetest working, and, for its size, the strongest mechanism man knows of. God sustains the life of that body in the individual against a thousand dangers seen and unseen, and the whole earth is laid under contribution to supply its wants. God maintains that life in the uninterrupted existence of mankind from generation to generation; and for this He orders and controls all the operations of nature, and all the events in providence. In that body, now mortal, doomed to decay and death, lies the germ of the glorified body of the saints: in some form it shall rise again from the tomb;—"this mortal shall put on immortality," and dwell with angels and the God of angels—with Jesus and like Jesus, in the case of all the saved. What was proper for God to create, care for, assume to Himself, redeem, raise again from the dead, and introduce to heaven, surely deserves our care.

It is true the bodily appetites are generally attended to with injudicious and overweening anxiety—pampering the flesh, while the precious soul and its interests are unheeded. But notwithstanding, not the less—all the more, is it necessary to tell men to bestow on the body proper care; this is as much a duty in its place, as to abstain from moral evil, and to follow that which is good.

Human life—the life of the body, is to be regarded as the property of God, given us in trust for usefulness. It is to be esteemed sacred. Its wanton destroyer is accursed. "The sixth commandment requireth all lawful endeavours to preserve our own life, and the life of others. Health is to be prized; when lost we are to resort to proper measures for its recovery, and all habits tending to injure it are to be avoided. Cleanliness; sober, industrious conduct; abstinence from intemperate indulgences; and proper attention to food—its quantity, quality, and wholesome cooking; all means of preserving health and life which God has provided directly or indirectly through human industry and art, are required, and to be sought after. "Whether ye eat or drink, or whatever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

The importance of this duty is enhanced by the close connection between body and mind, and the influence which the state of the one exerts upon the action of the other. It is an incontrovertible fact that the healthy, full-toned vitality of the soul is to some extent dependent upon vigor and healthiness in the body. Mind is manifested through the bodily organs. Injure, or destroy any organ, and you so far affect mind injuriously or destructively to all intents and purposes. A morbid physical condition, induced by vicious habits, will produce distemper

of both mind and morals, when there is no appearance of disease or hurt requiring physician's or surgeon's aid. Lowness of spirits, bad temper, even religious melancholy is most frequently owing mainly to a diseased condition of body;—"that has often caused a diseased conscience, which again has become the parent of unhealthy and polluted moral sentiments and actions."

Time was when men, aspiring to the highest order of sanctity, rested their claims to the eminence they sought on their austerities, fastings, tortures of the body, and filthiness! They thought they were "crucifying the flesh!" Such ideas originated in the old heathen notion of the two principles—Good, and Evil, with their respective progenies—Mind, and Matter. The soul was regarded as a spirit imprisoned in the body, and polluted by its lusts. "Waste the body," they said, 'it is accursed matter;' and set the spirit free, 'the offspring of Light.' All the while it was the spirit that was corrupt, lustful, carnal, which made the body the servile instrument of its will, and the sufferer in consequence. Such ideas are not altogether dispelled yet. "Crucifying the flesh" is not always understood to be the crucifying of corrupt nature—the evil bias, the pride, malevolence, and impiety of the soul. Neander relates that in the early Christian ages fasting was observed, by those who had more truly apprehended the Divine life, by abstinence from the ordinary more expensive meals, using a little plain food, and taking the difference between the cost of the more luxurious and plainer living and giving it to the poor. And such, you will find in Isaiah lviii., is precisely the fast which God has chosen.

Care then for the body as the instrument of the immortal soul—as that which is to be fashioned yet like Christ's glorious body. Use the good gifts of God as He designs them to be used, in moderation, and with thankfulness, and even that duty will contribute towards your preparation for a better world.

In the new world to which the Christian looks forward, the human intellect shall reach its highest state of capacity and culture; the same intellect which man possessed, and which began its enquiries here, shall prosecute them there through eternity. God made us intelligent. He seeks from us intelligent service and worship—praise with the heart and with the understanding. The revelation He hath given us is made to our intelligence; we cannot understand it till we know of things about us; we cannot comprehend heavenly things, if destitute of the knowledge of earthly. And God's works, around us, in us, are also a revelation to us. They cast light upon the Word. Just as we know

better all knowledge, shall we know more fully the saving knowledge revealed in Scripture.

Cultivate your intellect then. Give exercise to its powers. Take time. Spend money to nourish the craving for knowledge within you. It is true all secular knowledge may be well accounted loss for the excellency of, or in comparison with the knowledge of Christ. But if you seek and find the saving knowledge, that will not by any means hinder you from acquiring all the other you can, and its possession will benefit you in many a way.

It is conceded that if a man determines to pursue a course of wickedness, knowledge will make a more accomplished villain of him: but that is no proof that its tendency is not to better and elevate humanity. The intelligent evil-doer is a greater criminal, not only because he knows more; he excels the ordinary criminal chiefly because he has overleaped barriers of morality which education placed in his way, which are not encountered by the more ignorant man, and thus increased and intensified his villainy.

All truth—all matter of knowledge is, either God's works without us, or the cogitations and thoughts of our own and other minds, or the deeds of men—actions, and consequences, which have transpired under the overruling providence of God. There are no other objects of knowledge outside of revelation. And must not every intelligent view of any of these objects increase our knowledge of God, of His works, His wise dealings, His holy judgments, and His intimate connection with, and interest in the children of men?

Search after truth. All light is from God. Investigate, Learn, Reason. And by so doing enlarge and store the mind, which may revel yet in the science of heaven.

God made us also moral agents. We have a knowledge of right and wrong. We are under obligation to choose good, to resist evil, and accountable for all thought and doing to the Judge of all.

This moral sense places man still higher in the scale of being, and makes his position one of solemn and momentous consequence. He is forming a moral character here which is to qualify him for dwelling in the kingdom of light, or a character which is to fit him for the abyss of darkness and woe.

In the new earth dwelleth righteousness. The unjust, the false, the impure, the unholy, cannot enter the gates of righteousness. Even here, intellect—genius, without moral character, is but a splendid ruin

—a glittering gilding upon a substance rotten to the core,—the light of a wandering meteor cast upon the pathway to destruction.

True morality is accordance with God's moral law. Good moral character is conformity to God's will. We owe devotion and adherence to truth at all risks. Justice is to be regarded in all our dealings, and in all the estimates and purposes we form. Goodness is to be followed constantly, at home, and abroad. Mercy we need, and hope for, and mercy we must show, and bestow. In striving to act thus, we follow Christ; and these attainments are all possible through His grace. "Trust in the Lord then, and do good." So are you training for that state where all "His servants serve Him;" where "they see His face, and His name is in their foreheads;" that is, where perfect goodness—God-likeness—is visible in the very countenance, in the manner, and in all the actions of the family of God.

In glory God is all, and in all; He fills all heavens; and all love and adore Him there. Here that God must be sought and known, and His grace obtained, if we are to have a dwelling with all who love His blessed name.

Therefore in public and private worship, we are to reverence and adore Him as the Creator, the Supreme and only God, the Almighty and Everlasting Lord,—holy, and just, and wise, and merciful and gracious. We are to keep God's Sabbaths, and reverence His sanctuaries:—assembling in the great congregation to bow ourselves before the Lord, and hear what He hath to say to us, for our good alway. We are to delight ourselves in His abundant grace, and also in His holy law. And we are to make sacrifices according to the will of God, cheerfully surrendering means, inclination, even life itself, if need be, for His name's sake:—blessing Him ever for the goodness and mercy which have followed us all the days of our life, and for the hope of dwelling in His house for ever.

In this connection, one duty above all is incumbent on us, as being both dependent and sinful creatures,—that of prayer. All good is His, and must come to us from Him. Life, Health, Redemption, Heaven, are the gifts of God through Jesus Christ our Lord. "Let your requests be made known to God by supplication and prayer."

This attitude before God is honoring to Him, and becoming in us. Prayer reminds us of our dependence and our guilt: it brings us near to the Merciful: it is an exercise of the soul in healthiest action: and it is most beneficial in its results.

There is One Mediator between God and man, the man Christ

Jesus, and but one way of approach to the Mercy-seat. In Christ's name draw near and ask the Father, and He will give. By that new and living way venture to the throne of grace, as suppliants, and the needed mercy will not be withheld. Humility will be our garb then; and penitential feeling will inspire us with hatred of sin, and gratitude to the Saviour; and trustfulness will cast a peaceful calm into the weary, anxious heart. And there will be a looking unto Jesus on the Cross, and within the veil; and a pleading for the Holy Spirit of promise; and by God's grace we will become temples wherein that Spirit will dwell. And thus are we being prepared, and fitly qualified for a place in the temple above.

Reference has now been made to almost the whole circle of human duty—the glorifying God with the body and spirit which are God's.

Of the various duties mentioned, all are related in some way to the future life, and all are of importance, though not all of like importance. Let us suppose a man of bad character and dissipated habits, living with his wretched family in a ruined house, just ready to fall upon their heads. Outside the miserable dwelling the surroundings are like the mansion. What was once a garden is an uncultivated waste, with here a stagnant pool of fetid water, there a heap of rubbish, and, where anything green can grow, a growth of thistles and nettles doing their best to thrive. Round about all a shattered paling, that had been a neat fence, completes the picture of desolation. Everything about that man needs reform.

Let us further suppose that one day a better thought arises in his degraded mind. He will reform, and do well. An effort or two will not do. Some few repairs, a new fence, the restoration of the appearance of a garden are not enough; nor the propping up within and without of the old house, nor even a new house. He needs to become a new man, or all other repairs and reforms will leave an unhappy family still. But knowing this, and resolving to be a new man, ceasing from evil practices, and gradually returning to respectability and well-doing, surely he may prop the old house up till a new one is built, surely he may dress his ground and repair his fence meanwhile, and so doing, be doing well.

So man before God is a ruin;—undone, polluted and degraded by sin. He needs to be made new throughout. He needs above all and first of all a new heart—the living holy principle of grace, which God only can implant. If man in this state, convinced that he is wrong, resolves to be right, and this without reference to God, to Christ, to the

Spirit of all grace; he may reform somewhat, he may cast off some offensive habits, and assume some of a better kind; he may cultivate his mind in a certain way, and care for himself and his family in another manner than before. But if he stops there, if he intends that for his salvation, he is, as a sinner, as lost, or more lost than when he lay at ease in spiritual blindness and debasement. Suppose, however, that the fallen man attains to a true self-knowledge, and becomes aware of his guilt and danger, and that then he seeks unto Jesus for mercy and healing, that he prays for the new heart and the guiding Spirit, and longs for the sight of a reconciled God and Father looking on him in compassion. If Christ alone is regarded as his Hope and Salvation,—if the promised Spirit is sought and relied on as his sole leader to truth and right,—surely, while the good Spirit is drawing him on, he may be ceasing from every evil he can think of, and learning all the good he can,—he may be correcting errors, improving and adorning his mind, and bestowing on his body proper care;—abroad and in his family, in business and in religion, in private and public affairs, endeavouring ever to do right and seemly in the sight of God and men. He may, he must, he will, if God is working in him.

He does not make these duties his Saviour, neither the little ones concerning the body and the life that now is, nor the great ones about the soul and God and the world to come, but his Saviour has made them all sweet and profitable duties to him. So he pursues the path of commanded duty, Christ's own road; Christ is ever before him in it;—Christ, who opened for us heaven's gate, who prepared mansions in the Father's house for all his followers, and who in this manner prepares them for dwelling with Him there.

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